

Fever Might Be It

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Fever Might Be It

by [whosays_penultimate](#)

Summary

It happens to him like an act of God, amoral, destructive and merciless.

Chained on the Burning Lake

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

It happens to him like an act of God, amoral, destructive and merciless, and isn't that sweet irony.

He was telling Will the story of Achilles and Patroclus while drawing from memory the well-known painting, pencil moving over the paper in practiced, elegant strokes.

‘Achilles wished all Greeks would die so that he and Patroclus could conquer Troy alone’, he tells Will, raising his eyes from the drawing. It’s a challenge, but one he does not meet himself. There’s uncertainty and a sickening vulnerability in his own gaze. He fears the sway Will holds over him. He looks at him reverently.

Will stares back at him, mirroring the intensity and reverence of his gaze.

That’s what Will does so well. He mirrors him.

It’s his undoing.

*

Bedelia knew, she knew even before he did, clever slippery minx. Plenty worthy of being his partner. More than a little in love with him, but her love mixed and tainted with fear. He has never done anything to hurt her, but still, she fears him, much like a sheep instinctively fears a hound. (Will was never afraid of him, despite all reason to be.) Hannibal hates fear and he despises the fearful. It makes meat bitter and conversations stilted. It allows for inesthetic brushstrokes in the tapestry of existence. Hannibal annihilates Bedelia’s fear by a careful cocktail of drugs and soothing, sensual touches. Bedelia sighs and shivers like a finely tuned instrument. She is exquisite, her brilliant mind a match for the beauty of her body. Her potential endlessly intriguing, although Hannibal has lost hope it will ever be fully realized. Fiercely independent and solitary, but inexorably drawn to him, and he, feeding her codependency, with professional efficiency. Letting the leash untaut just *so, that she feels marginally in control.

And so it was that she, with her tainted, possessive, fearful love, with a woman’s jealous intuition, that she saw it all coming before he did.

Strange how Bedelia was never jealous of Alana. Maybe she sensed that, even though Alana was an enjoyment and a source of amusement to Hannibal, she was still only a means to an end. Sex is yet another tool of manipulation to Hannibal, a means to influence, not unlike therapy. He uses it sparingly, aware of the distorted emotional importance people attach to it. He used it on Alana in keen awareness of her and the throb of her unconscious desires. Like with Bedelia, he was an attentive, caring lover, focused on giving the partner pleasure. Placing himself second, the mechanics of sex and the fleeting physical pleasure he

experienced leading to the moment of climax, felt remote and irrelevant, to be forgotten soon after consummation. He made skillful love to Alana conscious of Will at the back of her mind, and at the forefront of his, a presence so glaring in its absence, he might as well have been sharing their bed.

Because – yes, Bedelia called it, he was obsessed with Will Graham.

That woman knew him a lot better than he gave her credit for. Perhaps he should marry her. Or at least take her on a trip to Florence. Hannibal had applied himself to Will like he would to a beautiful painting he wanted to absorb and recreate – he took time to discover him, took him apart, then breathed into him life anew. He felt proud because he was the one responsible for Will's sea change into something rich and strange, and for a long time he was never conscious of anything amiss in his interest towards the young man. But somewhere along the way, as he was goading Will towards becoming, he realized he had set him on a path to almost certain death. And that shouldn't have been a problem for Hannibal, but it was. He didn't want Will dead, not YET, he argued with himself, not electrocuted by pencil lickers. He wanted Will on the road to hell with him as company, and he set about, in an almost frenzy, to turn matters around. It was walking a thin wire. Hannibal could not recall ever being so reckless and so invested in a desired outcome. It was just a game it was amusing to prolong, that was all, the object of his interest proved such a fascinating toy, so clever, so malleable, so emphatic. Hannibal must save him. For him. His victory over Will Graham will be sweeter than any before.

But it was more than that.

As heady a feeling as it was to see Will so beautifully submissive to him, there was something even more arousing in the possibility they might be equals. When he allows himself to consider, to fantasize about this possibility, he feels a yearning and a thudding of the heart that he usually associates with high art.

He gives Will a child – and then he takes it away – because he can, as a foreshadowing of the life they might have together, to feed the anticipation – Will's? His own? He doesn't know anymore, it's all a blur.

He tests, he pushes, he needs to be sure. That Will is his and his alone. Is he still liable to break, like a fragile teacup, or will he morph, when the time is right, into the warrior that Hannibal sees sometimes behind his closed eyelids, who harbors no doubt and takes no prisoners?

So he tells Will of Achilles and Patroclus.

His office is lit with a dull fire, and there's a scent in the air that speaks of the beginning of the end.

And when he looks at Will, facing him over the drawing of Achilles and Patrocles and the light of the fire, he sees him as an equal, and as a lover, with all the possibility of pleasure and heartbreak that it entailed. He looks at him like he's never looked at a human being before.

It scares him because it makes him vulnerable. And Hannibal doesn't do fear. So if he ever – he won't! – but if he ever – No, not like this. It feels so menial, to be thinking of sex, when the scarlet thread he has used to bind them tightly together transcends that. But he can't help the coils of attraction twisting like snakes in his belly, reminding him that he's mortal and he can be hurt. He doesn't like the reminder. He lowers his gaze. Will's gaze has not faltered, but Hannibal is not sure Will is entirely his yet. There may be some resistance left in him, in the corners of his mind still untouched by probing antlers, and Hannibal loves the unexplored corners of Will's mind as much as he loves the parts which are laid bare to him. He loves Will. There is no hiding from it.

*

Will stands there in his kitchen and he pleads with him 'don't, don't'. He doesn't say please, but Hannibal hears it anyway. Will is not pleading for his life, he's pleading for Abigail's. And he's still not afraid of him, even as Hannibal brutally thrusts the knife into his belly, with no small amount of satisfaction, a cruel parody of the intimacy they could have shared. Hannibal allows himself an instant of closeness, he grips Will to himself, holds him tightly, breathing him in, he's safe to do it like this, because he's in control of the moment. Will shakes with shock and pain, blindly clinging to him, still hoping against hope, that the teacup might come back together – Hannibal crushes his hope, by slitting Abigail's throat. And this – even more than the belly wound he dealt him – is his punishment for a betrayal that hurt more than he could imagine – insidiously tearing at parts of him he didn't know existed.

"I already changed you", Will tells him, twists his own knife in Hannibal's tender insides.

Hannibal leaves him bleeding on the floor, next to Abigail, who's been living on borrowed time since he met her, and this is *right*, he's proud of himself that he managed to do the right thing, even as he's been swimming in such muddy waters - he feels dirty, and he needs to clean himself, not of the blood, but of everything that taints him. And even as he flees, with Bedelia, sipping champagne on the plane, he thinks at Will, 'Come find me, come find me.'

It's not over.

It's a segue.

Chapter End Notes

Title of fic comes from the John Donne poem, 'A Fever', which Hannibal also quotes in his letter of condolence written to Jack for Bella.

Title of chapter 1 comes from John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, it refers to how Satan was punished.

Red wine I drink and to the golden coast I sing

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“We’re more of the love, blood and rhetoric school. We can do you blood and love without the rhetoric, and we can do you blood and rhetoric without the love, and we can do you all three concurrent or consecutive. But we can’t give you love and rhetoric without the blood. Blood is compulsory.”

It's late and the shadows fall over the city of dreams.

The city where life and death and art mingle in impossibly beautiful hues.

Florence is the city where he became a man and where, he tells himself, he now returns victorious, with a beautiful woman on his arm and chances of greatness twinkling like fireflies around a forest stream.

The cold ancient walls speak to him.

The unspoilt, unapologetic beauty of the city is a monument and a complement to his appetites. So it's strange when he finds he has no momentary wish to indulge in them.

“It's when a dog doesn't eat...”, Bedelia tells him snidely.

To give her no further reason for inquiry and judgement – he could see the cogs turning in her mind – he sleeps with her.

The irony of writing the John Donne stanza to Jack Crawford in the wake of Bella's funeral does not escape him. Few things do, after all. He wonders if his own peculiar brand of fever will bring about the destruction of the world – or just his own.

He left a massacre behind but it's him who feels wounded. There's a fever-dream quality about his life these early Florence days, one he cannot wholly attribute to the city of dreams. He nurses his bitterness and cloaks it in majesty, elevating it to tragic heights.

He gets his appetite back with the sense of impending danger.

Past and present are blending together.

Will has come for him.

Let him give chase. Let him earn it. That Will should be the one to pursue him now gives him a bitter satisfaction, like when his mother scolded him then showered him with affection, and he held himself aloof and unforgiving.

He could never entirely predict Will, no, that's the strangeness, that's the beauty of Will. But that's also why he must put an end to this. The feelings he could not identify, these cumbersome and crippling emotions, that's the only way he could learn how to conquer them. At least that's what Bedelia advised and in that moment, with the early morning light of Florence coming through the window, the notes of the piano softly played, Bedelia, certain and flawlessly elegant watching him from across the table - it made sense. Like a half-tamed panther she approached him, cautious yet bold. She stroked her fingers through his hair and pressed his head to her chest, rewarding him for his decision. For the decision that was hers as much as his.

“If I saw you everyday forever, Will, I would remember this day.”

Even as he says it, he's planning the details of eating him. He feels him inside, quivers in anticipation. he will get to savour Will, consume him, absorb him, cancel out any of his resistance, past, present and future. They'll be one at last and then finally, finally, he'll find peace. He loses himself in the sensual pleasure of imagining it, and that's more like it yes, that's a feeling he can deal with, one as familiar and natural as breathing. Not like the muddled waters of shared physical intimacy.

Hannibal cannot decide whether or not he's grateful for the opportune intervention of the crooked policemen who sold him and Will to Mason Verger. It was an interesting reprieve, of course, and Hannibal is not one to shun new experiences. Mason's becoming was quite a spectacular one, if short-lived. His sister's might prove more lasting.

He's certain, however, that he cannot take the saw to Will's head a second time. In Will's house, in the middle of nowhere, sitting by his bed and watching him sleep, Bedelia's argument and his rash decision, spoken in sunny Florence, seem remote, absurd. Bedelia's played the last of her cards, he muses. 'I'll be coming for her', he thinks. 'There's no hole she can hide in this time, where I won't find her. And I'll savour her with the same vicious pleasure she'd have had me save for Will. I'll keep her alive and pliant until the very end. (I'll miss the softness of her skin and the cold, classic beauty of her features) I'll make her watch. I'll feed her sweet flesh to her, her own burning heart —' he remembers how she looked at him when he recited Dante's first sonnet, there was apprehension but reluctant heat in her gaze. ‘Well, it's only fit she were rewarded properly, because after all, she did have the right idea, for all the wrong reasons. I should have eaten Will a long time ago, and saved myself. Her mistake was in assuming I wouldn't be coming for her next either way. Or perhaps she did anticipate it, and only hoped to postpone the inevitable.'

For everyone who meets him lives on borrowed time, and subsequent meetings more or less successful attempts to postpone the same inevitability.

Hannibal sits on a chair next to Will's bed. Will sleeps, dead to the world. Snow is falling outside and there's a coziness and a fevered sweetness in the air around him, making his limbs heavy and his mind muddled with debilitating emotion. There are things he won't ever fully grasp about Will, but he wants to learn. He thinks, 'there is nothing of Will I don't want to make mine', and that thought blurs seamlessly into another 'there is nothing that Will must have that is not me.'

And then Will wakes.

Rejection shouldn't hurt him so much, shouldn't feel so commonly sinful, so undignified, like the memory of an imaginary knife finding the weak vulnerable flesh of his stomach and ripping it apart.

'You delight in wickedness and then berate yourself for the delight', he tells Will accusingly, 'if you had learnt to accept yourself for which you really are, we could have been in Florence now, with Abigail', he continues in his mind.

'YOU delight', Will answers, resentful. 'I tolerate,' he spits the words like they make him ill.

'Whatever makes it easier for you to sleep at night, to appease the fearful god of your conscience.'

'A god as unfamiliar to you as anything', Will counters.

'I can claim no deep understanding of it', Hannibal shrugs, 'but it is one *I * choose to tolerate. I understand that like all gods, it demands sacrifices.'

'Mine only ever demands *you* as sacrifice'.

'I know', Hannibal answers. 'And my compassion for you will not allow me to take offense in all the times you've tried to appease him with my blood.'

'It appears to me that you took plenty offense', Will says carefully, ignoring the glaring declaration behind Hannibal's words. 'You tried to eat my brains.'

Hannibal doesn't rise to the bait.

'You have no gods to appease or enrage', Will finally offers, uncertainly.

'No I don't,' Hannibal confirms. 'I am free.'

Will studies his face like he wants to memorize it before closing his eyes forever against the darkness.

'You're not free', he declares.

Beat.

‘Goodbye, Hannibal’, Will utters the words slowly and deliberately, like echoes into the walls of his mind.

And just like that, Hannibal understands that he isn’t – nor will he ever be again – free. His lips purse as he takes in the magnitude of his defeat. In his cruelty and wisdom, Will has trapped him so well, his throat burns with the memory of the ropes tightening around his neck.

The snow burns him as he kneels. His hands are forced behind his back, and snowflakes keep falling. Jack Crawford regards him with the amusement of a man who doesn’t find anything surprising anymore. Will Graham stands on the porch of his house, and looks at him from behind his glasses, iron and steel, like he’s already crossed on to the other side. The look that Hannibal returns is one of a wounded stag, begging for mercy. Will turns away and goes back into the house.

It’s still not over.

It’s an intermission.

Chapter End Notes

Title of chapter 2 comes from song ‘Eden’ by the band ‘On Thorns I Lay.’

Motto of chapter 2 is from ‘Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead’ by Tom Stoppard.

Angels Fall First

Chapter Notes

In this story, Survival post-WOTL & getting to a place of safety is subject to dream-logic so shhh, don't fight it ;)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Certainty you crave

He gives none. You live in

The web of his dreams.

At the moment of his surrender in Wolf Trap, nothing seemed more important to him than making sure he's placed as a steady, immovable temptation, at fixed coordinates, in Will's life, for Will to reach at the slightest whim. It seemed the only possibility at the time - and if Hannibal is honest with himself, if he could go back in time, he'd choose no other. But Will keeps himself remote, and his memory palace locked against his attempts to peer inside. The care in doing so tells Hannibal that he's an almost permanent presence in Will's mind, whether unwelcome or not, but Will holds his own. As for him - he has his own palace, in grandeur and beauty unmatched by any single place on earth, rooms overflowing with countless of joyous memories. As for the rooms that do not, he fills them with music. He's not overly miffed by his self-imposed captivity. The best part about it is that he gets to keep his control.

Seeing Will for the first time in 3 years is like putting together the last pieces of an ancient puzzle one forgot they were trying to assemble. It's also disconcerting. He doesn't know how to keep Will with him, how to make him stay longer. Hannibal knows doubt and it's a gnawing feeling. It gnaws at his gut like hunger does, like unappeased, relentless hunger, not like the cultured yearning for a bite. Will acts cold, does not call him by his first name, uses all the tricks in the book to keep his distance, physical and mental - but Hannibal knows these tricks, finally sees them for what they are and suddenly he can feel Will is yearning, desperate for him. As days pass, Will edges closer. Closer in mind and closer to the glass separating them. His hand pressed on the glass feels like absolution.

The ecstasy of dealing death never gets old. The ecstasy of sharing the feeling is new. His blood has never pumped faster, he has never felt more terribly, joyously alive. He drinks in the sight of Will in the wake of Dolarhyde's death, like he would a rich wine after an exquisite meal.

It would be more than enough for him, to have shared this moment, this thrill, with the one person in the world he wanted to know and be known by – and when did the great Hannibal, as like in greatness and appetite as his namesake, become so meek in expectations? – but then Will -

Will has a habit of stunning him, while never meeting his expectations, leaving him unsatisfied but strangely fulfilled.

He wouldn't be Will if he didn't.

And that he should, in the aftermath of the fight, reach for Hannibal, pressing himself close in an accepting and scintillating embrace – In that moment, Hannibal forgives Will's real and imaginary faults. Because the moment shocks him in its intensity, akin to the intensity of art and death, and it's funny how it never occurred to him how touch-starved he was after his lengthy captivity, but more importantly, how Will-starved he was. He clutches Will to him, reveling in the closeness he's finally allowed. He watches Will's lips lingeringly, he wants to taste them, he wants to taste Will's blood and sweat and fevered drive to kill and claim them as his own design. But he is reluctant to make a move and break whatever spell Will seems to be under. He is content to be there in the moment and let Will have his way, work through the maze of feelings which signal his becoming. Will breathes raggedly against his chest, and his arms go around his neck, and Hannibal is so sick with joy – with love? - that he thinks nothing of it. It takes a moment for him to register he's falling – not only in his mind – the cold wind sweeps past his ears and he smells the waves approaching. He thinks even if he could have seen it coming, he still would have done nothing about it. There's something refreshing about finally being passive.

The sudden thermal shock as he hits the water and goes swiftly under punches the air out of his lungs, painfully, but he doesn't let go of Will, as he fights for both their lives.

Will may have intended to end them, and Hannibal appreciates the tragedy and beauty of it, the elegant solution Will has come up with to end their zero sum game – but his newfound passivity is something he's willing to embrace only up to a point. He's just got a taste of Will's freely given closeness – for once not stolen when Will is sick, or hurt - and that previously dormant appetite fully awakened, he means to have more – a lot more. Everything.

The future bears Will's scent.

Hannibal drags an unconscious Will to safety and tends to him - this time obeying no promise but his own. They're both a mess of atrocious wounds, Hannibal spends an agony-filled hour removing the bullet from his own stomach. The world blurs with pain at the edges, and it feels comforting and familiar, it anchors him to reality. Once that is taken care of, he feels an immeasurable satisfaction with himself. Not many would survive a bullet and a fall from a cliff and be so efficient and clear-headed about it. He smiles, he is invincible like Achilles. He sets about to make Will invincible too. He drugs him - again - because he's like a dog falling back on his old tricks with a shaken and delirious Will at his side, who clings to him and shrinks from him within the same heartbeat. He needs to keep him safe from harm,

including self-inflicted (suicide is the enemy), so he can work on his wounds and heal him to the best of his ability. He pays particular attention to the wound on his cheek, working to minimize recognition. It is not aesthetics that revolts, it's something more primal, he does not want to be confronted with the mark of another on his own. His persistent diligence pays off and Will's wounds start the long slow healing process quite nicely. It is difficult not to feel a new surge of pride and joy as he witnesses his handiwork. He allows himself to tend and soothe and Will is pliant under his care, just like old times.

On the seventh day, he returns to their makeshift shelter, dragging the body of a deer – not his first choice - to find Will sitting up in bed, fixing him with eyes in which the skies still tumble, burning with fever, and Hannibal freezes in place, at a loss at how to explain, at how to *love*.

‘Are you hungry? I’m making dinner in a moment.’

Will shakes his head.

‘I –’, he chokes, voice raspy from disuse, ‘I don’t think – I will ever be hungry, or thirsty, or - warm, ever again. I feel – dead.’

‘Do you have the dull clarity of the dead?’

‘I think so.’

‘Then the bounds of your old life no longer define you.’

‘I feel unnatural, and tainted and wrong, sitting here with you. That we should have survived, it’s obscene.’

‘The world can never now fault you for lack of trying.’

‘The world has nothing to benefit and everything to lose with us in it.’

‘The world has need of us, Will. Et in Arcadia ego.’

‘A reminder of all that is crooked.’

‘And beautiful’, Hannibal reminds him.

‘And strange,’ Will acquiesces.

They meet in the middle.

Will smiles, and Hannibal mirrors him. He can play this game. He must.

He sits on the bed, next to Will, and quotes to him, his voice half-serious to guard against rejection, but quietly intimate:

*‘Let us stay, rather on Earth, beloved, where the unfit Contrarious moods of men recoil away
And isolate pure spirits and permit A place to stand and love in for a day With darkness and*

the death-hour rounding it.'

Will stares at him, expression inscrutable.

Hannibal continues, with more certainty in his voice than he feels:

'I see what you did. With that grand act of murder-suicide, you sought to appease the god of your conscience by giving me to him. But I have killed gods before, Will and I tell you, now he is destroyed. I have made a place for myself in your world.'

'What if he's not really destroyed?' Will asks.

'It is a possibility, but not one I'm willing to explore for the moment. I would much rather --', he stops, the words refuse to come out.

'Death and suffering are what brought us together. It is what you delight in. You can't seriously be considering throwing this kind of intimacy into the mix', Will says, carefully.

Hannibal starts to stand, but even his slight attempt at withdrawal seems to force the opposite reaction out of Will, who grabs his arm.

'I'm aware of how you feel. Your feelings are imprinted on me, I'm always moving within their net.'

'You have me at a disadvantage here,' Hannibal sneers, feeling threatened and resorting to familiar ways. 'Your feelings on the subject are a complete mystery to me.'

'I want all of you, and I don't want you to have everything that's not me', Will says abruptly, and Hannibal can see that he marvels at his own words as if Will has never considered them until they escaped his lips.

Before Hannibal can reply, Will laughs abruptly, avoiding his eyes, his old awkwardness returning:

'Also, regarding the -- uh, mechanics of the act -- I have never done this before, with a man.'

'I'll show you', Hannibal says. 'If you'll let me.'

But he still makes no move to touch him, he stands and waits. Will has to understand the magnitude of what he's being offered here, and to be strong enough to take it.

'If we do this - it will be the final act of annihilation of any lines that still divide us', Hannibal utters, as much for Will's benefit, as well as his own.

Will picks up the thread of his thoughts easily.

'It will seal us for each other,' he nods.

Hannibal closes his eyes, overwhelmed with his choice of words.

Will steps into his space.

'Are you scared?' he asks.

'Yes', Hannibal confesses. 'I feel conflicting emotions that I never associated with myself before. Nor with sex. Uncertainty is the first unfamiliar feeling you have awakened in me - although not the last. I am still not comfortable with either.'

The raw honesty in his words brings tears to Will's eyes.

'Are you saying I have power over you?'

'You have all the power in the world. Use it wisely.'

'I may not know how to do that,' Will says, with a small smile. 'I may end up throwing us over a cliff again.'

And then slowly, reverently, as if reaching for a mirage suspended in thin air, Will moves in to kiss him.

There is a fire in the small cabin. throwing shadows of bronze on their skin.

They run their hands over scars, old and new, both trembling with the thrill of discovery and possession.

'I have given you a girdle of truth and a crown of thorns', Hannibal thinks. 'Except this I did not give you.' He traces the scar on Will's cheek slowly. 'This is not mine. I do not claim it. I'd have it destroyed or – I'd have it reinvented.'

Will raises his eyes to his, alarmed. Attuned to Hannibal's feelings, he easily picked up on his mood change, as his fingers brushed over the scar.

'Don't, Will says. 'You're wrong. This scar is as much yours as it is mine. It's a reminder of when we fought and bled together. Don't lose yourself to the familiar feeling of wanting to hurt me to mark me, just because it's familiar to you. I was brave for you, now you will be brave for me.'

Will moves up his body and the heat of him pressed against Hannibal's body, both of them hard and hazy with desire, is both exciting and soothing. Will's hands working his member with more passion than skill feel intense, yet not enough. The air trembles, like fluid, distorted clocks, time shivers and waits for them. Will has too much power over him in those moments and Hannibal feels the phantom sensation of falling, waves rushing to meet him. It's too much, too soon, the strangeness of being so vulnerable too disquieting – touch has never been so laden with music and colour – and this won't do - he must regain some control – get to the mechanics of it, as Will so prosaically put it. He abruptly turns Will around and traps him, facedown on the bed, runs his hands all over his body like mapping an unfamiliar canvas, builds a new room in his memory palace and shuts it there, under lock and key – and the windows of the room looks out to the ocean.

When he starts to prepare Will, slowly and carefully, he lapses into clinical.

‘You are absurdly preoccupied with not causing me pain’, Will says.

Hannibal ignores the obvious bait.

‘I have always paid the price of being close to you with tears and blood, why should this time be any different?’

‘Do you welcome the pain?’ Hannibal asks, curious. ‘Do you need it?’

‘No, Will answers. ‘I find no sexual gratification in pain.’

‘Causing you pain is the furthest thing from my mind at the moment.’

‘I am relieved to hear it. But you’re in doctor mode now. You’re disengaging. You don’t get to do that. I won’t let you forget you’re here with me. Give me everything.’

‘It’s too much.’

‘I know’, Will smiles warmly, amused, but with a certain dose of satisfaction. ‘It’s overwhelming for me, too’, he confesses.

Will’s wide eyes betray a sensual vulnerability which Hannibal finds very appealing, but the lust to take and own is tainted with the desire to cherish. He stops and sits back.

Will turns around and pushes Hannibal down none too gently, his head slams on the pillow. He looks up to see Will hovering over him, the light of the fire dancing enticingly over his features. The bedding feels cool against his back and Will is a trail of fire pressed to his front. Although it hurts him to watch, he keeps his eyes on Will as he eases himself onto his throbbing member, his face a beautiful mess of pain and pleasure. A slow, agonizing push. Hannibal waits, he doesn't move, allowing Will to have the moment, and does not close his eyes despite the overwhelming need to retreat into comforting darkness. He feels tears prick at the corners of his eyes. Will impales himself fully then stills, panting heavily, waiting for his body to adjust and Hannibal mirrors his stillness, expectant - waiting for the world to end, or to begin, -- and dreading a momentous and ruinous revelation.

But he finds he cannot focus on words, only on touch and colours, and everything dissolves into a blinding, tear-soaked pleasure. Then Will starts moving, and the world drops dead.

Hannibal gasps, reaches up, half sitting, claws at Will.

‘I’m afraid, Will,’ he breathes into his hair.

‘Of what?’ Will whispers.

It’s the fever, it will destroy him.

‘Of destruction’, he answers honestly.

Will's eyes are shining, he drinks in Hannibal's words like an offering. He kisses him almost brutally, but then he smiles.

'Good', he says. 'I'll take no less.'

Chapter End Notes

- Title of chapter 3 is the name of a Nightwish album.
- The motto of chapter 3 is a haiku I wrote a while back, it's about the relationship writer/audience, but I think it can also be used to describe the Will-Hannibal relationship.
- Hannibal quotes to Will part of Sonnet XXII from Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Sonnets from the Portuguese, written for her husband, Robert Browning.

Epilogue (Will's POV)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Will shall be the sterner, as our strength lessens"

The last conscious thing in Will's mind as he drifts off is the story of Achilles and Patroclus.

But when he does enter sleep, he dreams not of Greek warriors but of Norsemen. And the dream unfolds in strangeness like no other he's had before.

He sees himself, as if from afar, furs on his back and a heavy sword on his lap. The winding paths of his thoughts are crooked, unfamiliar. The ethics of right and wrong are both foreign and strangely comforting to him.

In the dream, Hannibal is his enemy and he plots and pledges the lives of his men to his downfall. Men, women, and beasts are battle fodder in Will's single-minded quest to defeat him. Blood pours with wine. Death is merry in his dream – greeted like a friend, a guide to the fields of gold where the brave dwell forever. He meets Hannibal on the field of battle and they instantly know each other. They fight, but neither gains the upper hand. They struggle together, clutched in an embrace that tests all their strength and resolve, but still neither can find strength or resolve enough to deal the final blow, without the other parrying it. They fight for three long days, or is it nights – light and darkness seem to blend seamlessly into each other, a flickering play of warmth and shadows on their strained faces. But Will is sure of the cold crisp air of early morning when they stumble together, in a heap of limbs, faint with exhaustion and thirst. Will loses sense of self, until he feels the nudge of a beast against his shoulder. Warm puffs land on his neck and the stag grunts, shaking his head. It turns, as Will watches, and departs at a steady trot, until it almost disappears from view. But it soon comes rushing back again, and Will sees that he now glistens in the morning sun, and as he shakes his head again, rivulets of water fly and shimmer in the air. Will licks his painfully cracked lips and starts a slow crawl, edging himself towards what he now knows is a blessedly cool stream just out of his mortal sight. He finally reaches it and he drinks greedily, almost choking, the taste of the water better than anything he remembers tasting, and as he drinks, strength returns to him, and clarity. He takes water back to Hannibal, he washes his grimy face, his pale lips. As his enemy is slowly revived, Will lets him lap a few gulps from his cupped hand and then helps him stand. They look upon each other and are glad. They resolve never to part and love each other well until the end of time. And when they hunt – to hunt together.

But there was one who was not content. In Will's dream, Bedelia appears crudely beautiful, less inclined for pleasantries and decadence and more inclined for bitterness and scorn.

She resents that Hannibal should now be friends with one to whom he had pledged to destroy or conquer. And always she strove to remind Hannibal of the power and rule he could have,

and she by his side, if Will was to be removed.

This came to Will's ears at last and he said to Hannibal

'If you love me, you will banish her.'

But Hannibal answered 'She is but a querulous little bird, but of such soft and lovely plumage that one hesitates to harm her. You have nothing to fear from her. I enjoy her and you shall let her be.'

'By Odin, I shall harm her', Will thought, 'with or without your help.'

Bedelia now perceived Will's mind and because she was afraid of him and could not harm him outright, she started to weave a spell, a spell of blindness and deceit.

'I will keep my beauty wholesome,

I will guard my den of pleasures,

I will bind the howling wolf,

I will have him at my heel.'

In Will's dream, the golden times of friendship and battle, of blood and wine, of sweet meats and sweeter indulgences, became tainted with the thought that Hannibal did not love him anymore. And then his rage was fire. And Bedelia's innocent game, a game of love scorned, of petty quarrel, became to him a monstrous crime to be punished. And so he came upon her in her bedchamber and dragged her by her hair in the banquet room, where Hannibal and others were feasting. Not heeding her desperate cries, he thrust his dagger in her throat, which Hannibal deemed too soft for cutting. He threw her lifeless form upon the table, in front of him, to mingle blood and wine.

'Here, have her meat for dinner, since you were loath to part with her sweet taste.'

All present stood and backed away in wary fear, except for Hannibal who calmly took in hand his goblet, which threatened to fall to the floor. He righted the goblet on the table, which would have fallen and shattered on the heavy stones. And it seemed to Will that time had stopped, or else that time started going backwards, although he couldn't say why.

Hannibal stood up.

He looked at Will for a long moment.

Will returned his gaze, dizzy with the smell of blood and drunk with power, and the heady feeling of perceived wrongs avenged.

And in that moment, Dream Will reached back to his Real Self and remembered a look he and Hannibal shared in another lifetime, in an elegantly furnished office, by the light of a more sedate fire than that which warmed the Norse banquet hall.

‘Shall we?’ Hannibal said, amusement and affection shining on his features, and Will followed him out of the hall and into a chamber more fit for the sweet passing of the time which they were both set on --

Will moans brokenly in his sleep.

Hannibal, though not fully awake, tightens his grip on him, and kisses the back of his neck, slowly, languidly.

Will jolts awake and Dream Will and Real Will are one. His body thrums with need, he wants to hold Hannibal down and make him take it.

‘I don’t want you to have everything that’s not me’, he remembers himself speaking these words and understands their meaning belatedly.

Between the dreamscape and the reality, there is only one certainty. And who can tell the difference anyway?

He remembers the Bedelia in his Dream as Hannibal lazily and carelessly traces hot trails on his skin that burn but do not leave a mark, and he feels the same fevered possessive rage. He sees clearly now, her love for Hannibal was love and fear intermingled, in awe of his strength and cruelty. In her mind, Hannibal’s bond with Will robbed him of these attractive qualities which she was to enjoy safely, behind the veil. She thought wrong. Hannibal's bond with him only coloured his distinctive qualities in new and stranger hues.

Hannibal doesn’t seem to hear him, mouth busy against Will’s skin, hands tangled in his hair, but if he did, Will is sure he would approve of his fever, as he whispers to Dream Bedelia and Soon to be Meat Bedelia:

‘I have tamed the howling wolf,

I shall set him on your heels.’

THE END

Comments / criticism very much appreciated! :) Thank you for reading~

Chapter End Notes

- Motto of epilogue is a line from Battle of Maldon, Anglo-Saxon poem as translated by JRR Tolkien.

- The poem/incantation that Bedelia first says, and then Will twists it as his own, are the product of my own fucked up mind.

- I'm not really happy with how this story turned out, but there you go. I wanted to describe the shift in dynamics between Will and Hannibal after S3. I feel like Hannibal is discovering the world and himself like a person who falls in love for the first time and everything else must take a ticket and wait. Whereas for Will, his love for Hannibal is intrinsically connected to his exploration of the darker side of himself, his desire for vengeance, blood and violence, his awakening as a new beast. They have blurred into each other so much, that they have become reversed and still mirror each other. Also, I am forever fascinated by the Will – Bedelia – Hannibal triangle and this is one of my takes on it. Anyway. I love Bryan Fuller's show and I hope I did it some justice, and I love the clever and creative Hannibal fandom. #Nakamaforever ^^

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